



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 June 2021 by A J Sutton BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

by Martin Seaton BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/TO355/D/21/3270394

57 Halfpenny Lane, Sunningdale, Ascot, SL5 0EG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Ms Andromahe Michael against the decision of Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref 20/02944, dated 2 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 8 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of two storey and single storey rear extension, alterations to fenestration, front drive and side path to be refinished in gravel and pavers following demolition of detached garage and shed.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matter

3. My attention has been drawn to emerging development plan policies. The Borough Local Plan Submission Version has been submitted for examination. Whilst progress continues to be made on the document, it has not reached a sufficiently advanced stage to attach any more than very limited weight to its policies.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for Recommendation

5. The appeal property is an attractive semi-detached dwelling at the end of a cul-de-sac of period properties which forms a spur off Halfpenny Lane. The area is described as a Victorian Village townscape type in the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan (NP)¹.

¹ Ref Map 9 - RBWM Townscape Assessment Map

6. The group of six dwellings, including the appeal property, on this western side of the private lane are of the same period and architectural style. They are defined principally by the strong gable which forms the neat shape of the pairing of dwellings apparent at the front of the properties. This built form contributes strongly to the pleasing uniformity in this part of the lane. Although views of the area are limited, these features are evident from the nearby footpath and when in the street. The property appears unaltered to the side and its pair, No 59, has a small extension to its side. The other four properties in the row have more substantial side extensions.
7. The proposed development would remove the small garage to allow a sizeable two storey extension to the side of the dwelling. It would almost double the width of the front elevation of the property. The extension would have a forward-facing gable, the apex of which would be set below the existing roof ridge.
8. Although seeking to reflect the existing gable, given its scale, the proposed extension would compete with this important original feature, thereby diminishing its importance when viewed from the street. The vertical shadow gap detail would create a visual separation between the addition and its host and as a result the development would not appear as a harmonising extension to the dwelling but would create two distinct forms. This sizeable competing form would be a detracting feature which would be detrimental to the appearance of the original dwelling and appear as an incongruous addition.
9. I have had regard to the extensions to the neighbouring properties of the same architectural styles as the appeal property, which include Nos 61, 63, 65 and 67. I observed some are more successful than others and agree that the poorer examples should not be a justification for further poor design in the area.
10. However, the examples that do harmonise with their host dwellings, in particular Nos 63 and 65, comprise a hipped roof and, in this respect, they are distinctly different from the design before me. To introduce a stridently different design to this would therefore erode the existing positive uniformity and would act as a significant departure from the character of the built form in the street scene. Whilst the proposed design may be contended to be innovative, it would nevertheless fail to reflect the existing rhythm even allowing for the incorporation of design variations of roofscapes in the area. Moreover, there is no certainty that similar designs would come forward for other properties, and therefore the development would appear incongruous and would not respect the form and character of the area.
11. I am satisfied that conditions attached to any planning permission regarding the certainty of the development would not resolve the harm identified.
12. Therefore, I conclude, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to policies NP/DG1, NP/DG2 and NP/DG3 of the NP, and saved policies DG1 and H14 of Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan, which collectively require all new development should demonstrate good quality design, and with regards a proposal in Townscape Assessment Zone Victorian Village, it must respect the form and character of the street and the surrounding area.
13. It would also be inconsistent with the guidance set out in RBWM Townscape Assessment Vol 3: Ascot Group 2020 which recommends that proposals reflect

the rhythm and variation of roofscape and insensitive development that would disrupt this rhythm should be avoided, and with policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) which seek to secure well designed places.

Other Matters

14. I have had regard to the extant planning permission² allowing a large side extension which represents a strong and valid fallback position in this case. The permitted hipped roof form would be similar to other examples in the street scene, and this permission would provide the living space enhancement required by the appellant without the harm to the character and appearance of the area identified in this appeal.
15. There is no dispute between the parties regarding the use of materials and some of the design details would conform with the Borough Wide Design Guide, although these would be neutral factors in this case. Landscaping, reinstatement of timber frames and render removal would enhance the appearance of the property. Energy efficiency measures, efficient use of land, and removal of the garage, which is not a dominant feature in the street given its size, would be of benefit. Taking account of the scale of development these amount to small benefits that would not outweigh the harm to the appearance of the dwelling and the character of the area.
16. I have been directed to other examples of extended properties to the east and north of Halfpenny Lane (Nos 49, 51 and 55). However, these properties are of a different architectural style and therefore not comparable to the appeal property and the group of paired dwellings which it forms a part. I have not therefore attached any significant weight to these examples for this reason.
17. Whilst I have had regard to the appellant's reference to the Framework as it relates to designated heritage assets and the comparison with sites outside conservation areas, this is clearly not relevant to this context and the drawing of such parallels has not therefore been determinative in this case.

Conclusion and Recommendation

18. There are no material considerations, including the Framework, that indicate the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A J Sutton

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

19. I have considered all the submitted evidence and agree that the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin Seaton

INSPECTOR

² Ref Planning Permission 19/03562/FULL